Ministries/Departments, banks, financial institutions, NGOs and other agencies, prepared a Report on "Strengthening of Credit Delivery to Women particularly in Tiny and SSI Sector". The Report contains a 14 Point Action Plan for implementation by public sector banks. The salient features of the Plan include, *inter alia*, redefining of Banks' Policies/Long Term Plans, setting up women cells, simplification of procedural formalities; orientation of bank officers/ staff on credit requirements of women; publicity campaign for creating awareness about credit facilities; entrepreneurship development programmes/training facilities for women; specialized branches for women; data collection and involving NGOs/SHGs/ Women's Cooperatives.

The Report was sent to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for implementation of the 14 Point Action Plan by the Public Sector Banks and monitoring of the action taken. RBI have, accordingly, issued necessary instructions to all the public sector banks. The implementation of the 14 Point Action Plan by banks is expected to enhance credit flow to women.

**Decline in GDP**

*127. SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is fact that there has been continuous decline in the growth rate of Gross Domestic Product (GDP);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c ) whether it is also a fact that non-investment of capital is the main reason for decline in the Gross Domestic Product;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) whether it is also a fact that purchasing power in markets is going down due to decline in employment?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA): (a) and (b) The growth in gross domestic product (GDP) at factor cost (at constant prices) was 4.8% in 1997-98. It went up to 6.6 in

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† Original notice of the Question was received in Hindi.

1998-99. It declined marginally to 6.4% in 1999-2000, but sharply to 5.2% in 2000-2001.

(c) and (d) As per the latest figures released by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) investment rate measured by the ratio of gross domestic formation to GDP at current market prices declined from 25.0% in 1997-98 to 23% in 1998-99 and increased to 23.3 per cent in 1999-2000.

(e) According to the 55th Round of Survey on Employment and Unemployment conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) during July 1999-June 2000, the employment in absolute numbers is placed at 397 million in 1999-2000 as against 374.45 million in 1993-94. The per capita income at constant (1993-94 prices) prices has risen from Rs. 7698 in 1993-94 to Rs. 10204 in 1999-2000 and further to Rs. 10561 in 2000-01. Besides, the proportion of people below the poverty line in the country, has also declined from 36% in 1993-94 to 26.1% in 1999-2000. These trends reflect that the purchasing power has not only increased but has become more broad based.

**Import of Natural Gas from Bangladesh**

*128. DR. Y. LAKSHMI PRASAD: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Bangladesh Commerce Minister has expressed desire to export natural gas to India; and

(b) if so, the action taken to explore the possibilities at any early date?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI RAM NAIK): (a) and (b) No, Sir. However, Government have formed a consortium of three oil Public Sector Undertakings, namely, Indian Oil Corporation Limited, Gas Authority of India Limited and Oil & Natural Gas Corporation Limited to participate in any venture for import of natural gas from Bangladesh.